



Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: June 8, 2022

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes.

1. Administration.

Members in Attendance: Dan Amstutz (DPCD), John Aslanian (Associate Member), Beth Benedikt (Associate Member), Wayne Chouinard (DPW), Ray Jones, James Stubbe (Associate Member), Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Jeff Maxtutis, Lenard Diggins, Melissa Laube, Tycho Nightingale, Scott Smith, and Corey Rateau (APD).

Members of Public in Attendance: Judy Crocker, Linda Epstein, Petru Sofio, and Joe Solomon.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law". The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

B. Approval of May 11, 2022 Meeting Notes.

The approval of the Minutes of the May 11, 2022 meeting was postponed to the next meeting, as there were not enough Members present for a quorum.

C. Welcome to new Associate Members.

John Aslanian, Beth Benedikt, and James Stubbe were introduced briefly and welcomed as new Associate Members of TAC.

D. Correspondence sent/received between May 6 and June 3, 2022.

1. April 14, 2020 memo from Marie Krepelka to Daniel Amstutz, “Dangerous Intersection @ Wachusett Ave and Appleton St”
2. May 12, 2022 memo from Dan Amstutz to Adam Chapdelaine, “Correspondence Regarding Intersection of Wachusett Ave & Appleton Street”

Dan Amstutz provided context of the correspondence regarding Wachusett Ave and Appleton St, noting complaints about westbound traffic running the stop sign and the long crossing distances for pedestrians. MBTA Route 78 Bus travels through this intersection.

The Connect Arlington Plan includes a short-term concept for intersection: eliminate one leg of the intersection to decrease confusion. In particular, remove the Valentine Rd access to the intersection and divert it to Dow Ave.

Wayne Chouinard remarked that the Connect Arlington concept will not address drivers running the stop sign. Tree branches might be obscuring the stop signs. Also consider adding advanced warning signs.

Linda Epstein said that she takes the bus and walks thru there frequently. Drivers on Appleton St or Dow Ave tend to do rolling stops. Sightlines on Wachusett Ave are blocked by bushes on the corner of Appleton St.

3. May 13, 2022 email from Adam Chapdelaine to Daniel Amstutz, “Re: FWD: AHS – TAC Items”

TAC previously reviewed the transportation impact assessment for the AHS rebuild. TAC took a “wait-and-see approach” as there were too many unknowns.

The new building eliminated the drop-off road at the front of AHS with access from Mass Ave. The drop-off road will be moved to the rear of the AHS building with access from Mill Brook Dr via Mill St. The new drop-off circulation will not be in place for a few years until construction is completed. Skanska (the construction contractor) intends to install a new traffic light at Mill St and Mill Brook Dr, however, there is concern about the proximity to the traffic light at the Mill St and Mass Ave intersection.

The drop-off and pickup area on Mass Ave in front of AHS will need to be a fire lane. This creates a conflict with automobiles crossing over the bike lane. Petru Sofio added that his AHS friend was doored on Mass Ave. The conflict between automobiles and bicycles is dangerous, especially in the morning. He asked whether a parking protected bike lane could be considered. Amstutz noted the dooring incident occurred on a different part of Mass Ave, not in front of AHS.

Wayne Chouinard inquired about the final buildout for this stretch of Mass Ave. He will contact Jim Feeney to obtain the current buildout plan and scope.

Shoji Takahashi wondered how traffic patterns would be affected by the AHS-Minuteman Bikeway Connection scheduled for completion in 2024. Will students be dropped off at Oak Hill Dr, walk to the Bikeway, and then AHS? John Aslanian added that there could be multiple changes over the next few years leading to convergence of more students arriving by bicycle: Minuteman Bikeway and Mystic River Path connection. He noted that the Bikeway crossing at Mill St is a conflict point.

2. Public Comments (for information only, not for action).

There were no public comments.

3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on the agenda).

A. Wayne Chouinard provided an update from the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Construction season is in full swing. Water projects ongoing on Sunnyside Ave. Medford St and River St are being prepared for paving June 20 – 22.

Laura Swan inquired about the status of pavement markings, such as Lowell St, Lake St, Bates Rd, River St, and Medford St. Wayne Chouinard responded that pavement markings are designed according to the bike network design matrix, which is in the process of being updated.

Ray Jones inquired about pavement markings for stop bars at intersection of Westminster Ave and Westmoreland Ave. Wayne Chouinard responded that the pavement marking contractor will be coming down Lowell St, and he will add it to the list.

John Aslanian inquired about markings for diagonal crossing at certain intersections that have an exclusive pedestrian phase. Wayne Chouinard responded that a longer pedestrian phase would be required for intersections with markings for diagonal crossing.

B. Dan Amstutz provided an update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).

MassTrails Grant project (Mystic River Path to Minuteman Bikeway). Virtual public meeting is scheduled for June 22 at 7:30pm. Per the grant terms, the project plan by Toole Design must be completed by the end of June. In response to a question from James Stubbe, Dan Amstutz responded that the Arlington side of the river was designated for a path and the Medford side was designated to-be kept natural.

Wayne Chouinard pointed out the unusual entry/exit access to the Gulf Station at Mystic St and Summer St/Mystic Valley Pkwy and inquired about proposals to redesign the intersection such as installing a traffic rotary. He added that the traffic signals need to be upgraded and that a rotary could be a solution. Dan Amstutz responded that the proposal is for tightening the intersection.

Minuteman Bikeway Planning Project. Virtual public meeting is scheduled for June 29 at 7:30pm. The draft project plan by Kittelson & Associates is currently being reviewed by DPCD.

Mass Ave and Appleton St Corridor Project. In-person public meeting at Town Hall is scheduled for June 23 at 7pm for the public to comment on specific areas. Stantec will present data. No concepts will be presented at this time.

Chestnut St and intersection of Chestnut St with Mystic St. Stantec is performing data collection and analysis, as well as land surveys.

Stratton Elementary School Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Sidewalk Project. MassDOT and Pare Corporation are discussing design changes.

Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. The kickoff will be at the end of the summer.

DPCD Director. Planning Director position has been posted and the Town is interviewing candidates.

C. There was no update from the Police Department (APD).

4. Update: MBTA Bus Stops

Representatives of the MBTA are scheduled to attend the June 22 Select Board Meeting to discuss changes to service in the Town under the MBTA Better Bus Project. Bus stops along the Park Ave corridor will see substantive infrastructure improvements for accessibility. However, certain bus stops are being proposed for removal. Notably, however, Route 78 will retain a bus stop on Park Circle. MBTA is seeking concurrence with the public and the Select Board to move forward with design for the retained bus stops. Laura Swan inquired whether the Select Board could deny the MBTA request to remove bus stops. Dan Amstutz responded that the Select Board controls parking and has traffic authority; MBTA is seeking Town buy-in to the proposed changes.

5. Update: Dallin SRTS.

Judy Crocker of MA SRTS presented her observations of the Dallin School-initiated pilot to improve its arrival/dismissal based on recommendations from SRTS. She observed arrival on Monday June 6, a beautiful late spring day, compared to the original arrival/dismissal audit from last fall, which was cold and rainy.

A unique feature of the Dallin arrival/dismissal is closing Florence Ave along the one-block stretch in front of the school main entrance. To do so, Dallin School has rotating adult volunteers move construction barrels and saw-horse barriers at two intersections on Florence Ave (at George St and at Renfrew St).

Originally, there was concern on the reduction of parking under the pilot plan. However, only two spots were lost directly in front of the school, and the drop-off lane on Florence Ave along the playground is functioning smoothly reducing the need for parking.

One of the traffic supervisors was very enthusiastic about the pilot changes. The bus driver for the middle school students said it was a much safer situation for students.

Laura Swan added that Dallin school sent out a survey to parents and guardians about the pilot, with survey respondents reporting a significant increased perception of safety. More parents and guardians reported that they were more likely to let their student walk or bike to school (67%). Final survey results are being calculated.

Laura Swan will draft a memo to Dallin School in support of it continuing the program, to-be voted on at the next TAC meeting. Dallin School is seeking Select Board approval to continue the changes under the pilot for the coming school year.

6. Update: Summer Street Crosswalk.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Arrival and Dismissal Audit for Peirce Elementary School has been completed and is being reviewed by its Principal. The SRTS Audit remarks on Summer Street crossing, which is understood to-be consistent with the TAC Working Group assessment.

7. Discussion: Overlook Rd Traffic Calming

Shoji Takahashi showed data for traffic volume and speed counts obtained by Accurate Counts using tubes placed on Overlook Rd just north of Peter Tufts Rd on May 10 – 11 (Tuesday and Wednesday). Overlook Rd is a residential road with a speed limit of 25mph. 47 vehicles traveling northbound exceeded 30 mph (3.6%); and 73 vehicles traveling southbound (5.1%) exceeded 30 mph.

Wayne Chouinard expressed surprise at the number of vehicles traveling more than 30 mph. He suggested speed enforcement as the next step. Shoji Takahashi will request APD speed enforcement in the area.

8. Update: Mt Gilboa Traffic Calming

Ray Jones showed data for traffic volume and speed counts obtained by Accurate Counts using tubes placed on Westminster Ave near Montague St. He noted that the sidewalk is not continuous on Westminster Ave and showed sketches of possible traffic-calming measures (median and neckdown) from a 2008 study of the area.

Wayne Chouinard wondered whether a source of speeding vehicles on Westminster Ave is the detours to Summer St from Lexington. MWRA is replacing water lines down Summer St, which requires traffic detours. APD has requested that MWRA not divert traffic onto Lowell St.

9. Update: Thompson Area Traffic Calming

Laura Swan discussed the intersection of N Union St and Norcross St, which is adjacent to Thompson School and the playground. A crosswalk is marked on north side only. A question is whether the intersection also warrants a crosswalk marked on the southside of the intersection. Wayne Chouinard remarked that N Union St will be upgraded to all-accessible curb ramps, and marking of crosswalks depends on where people are headed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.